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Mr. Norris
Woodford

THE PETITION OF THE UNBORN BABES TO THE CENSORS OF THE Royal College of PHYSICIANS OF LONDON.

[by Frank Nicholls]

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This treatise was said to be wrote
by Dr. Frank Nichols - a Member of
the Roy: Colledge of Physicians -
& for which Dr. Nesbit commenced a suit
at Law against him

Sr Wm Browne then President of the Colledge
Sr. Edward Hulse a Member
Dr. Nesbitt a Member & Man Midwife
Dr James Douglas 2° — 2° —
Dr John Bamber a Man Midwife who had
used to read Lectures on
Courses of Midwifery

Mr. Harris of Watford

TO THE

CENSORS

OF THE

Royal College of PHYSICIANS of *London*;

THE

Petition of the UNBORN BABES.

Humbly Sheweth,

THAT, although your Petitioners are not his Majesty's natural-born Subjects, nevertheless, being resident within his Dominions, they are by the Laws and Constitutions of his Kingdoms intitled to Protection. (A)

But

(A) However evident this Proposition may seem, it has been said, that in a late Conversation among the Elects a very different Doctrine was espoused.

The

But ſo it is, that we your Petitioners have of late Years been grievouſly ill-treated by ˣ Dr. *Pocus*, ˣ Dr. *Maulus*, and other evil-minded Men their Followers and Confederates; who, not haveing the Fear of God before their Eyes, nor Abilities to get an honeſt Livelihood, have aſſumed the Character and Diſcourſe of Old Women; and takeing advantage of the Fears and Ignorance

The Diſcourſe, it is ſaid, aroſe upon a Memorial lately preſented to the Cenſors, requiring them, as a Court of Inqueſt conſtituted by Parliament, to enquire into the Deaths of ſix Children ſaid to have died in the Delivery under the Hands of a Man-midwife. The Diſcourſe was open'd by Dr. *Pocus* in a labour'd Harangue, by which he endeavour'd to prove, that unborn Children neither being Chriſtians, nor having taken the Oaths, cou'd by no means be intitled to Protection either from the Church or the State. He endeavour'd likewiſe to ſhew, that a Child in the Womb might be conſider'd as a Wart or a Wen; but at moſt it could only be look'd on as a Twig of a Tree, or a Leaf of a Plant, which might reaſonably, and according to common Uſage, be ſacrificed to the Preſervation or Convenience of its Parent. He enforced his Opinion by the Example of a Cow with Calf, in buying which the Butcher takes a Receipt only for a Cow, whereas, if the Calf were a diſtinct Creature, an Action wou'd ſtill lie againſt him for the Calf. In like manner, he ſaid, if a Thief is indicted for ſtealing a Mare, and is acquitted, if the Mare proves with Foal, the Thief might be again indicted for the Foal, which, according to his Law-readings he affirm'd, cannot be. ˣ Sir *William* ſeconded the Opinion of *Pocus*; but at the ſame time gave it another turn. He thought, that a Child in the Womb, in the full Signification of the Word, was properly an Abceſs, being deſign'd *abcedere a matre*, to go from the Mother, and as ſuch the Operator had a right to let it out (*according to the learned Daniel Turner*) in ſuch manner, as he ſhould judge beſt. The Chairman ſmiled his Approbation of this Conceit, and Sir *Edward*, who had ſat muſing upon a dirty Bargain of *Aſſiento Tobacco*, cry'd, *Aye, aye, why not?*

The Aſſembly were riſing, when aſtoniſh'd at ſuch wild Diſcourſe the Immortal *Harvey* ſpoke from that Marble-Buſt, which overlook'd them. He explain'd to them, that Life and the Circulation were inſeparable; that, as theſe

Children

Ignorance of our Mothers, perſwade them, that we your Petitioners are their avowed Enemies; and that our Appearance in the World will be to their utter Ruin and Deſtruction. By which wicked Perſuaſions our Mothers are led into a Confidence and Reliance on the Friendſhip and Aſſiſtance of theſe ignorant Men; and hire them at extravagant Rates to diſtreſs, bruiſe, kill, and

Children had their diſtinct Circulations and Motions, ſo it cou'd not be deny'd, that they were diſtinct Beings, that they had a Life of their own, and were equally intitled to Preſervation with their Mothers. That their Lives were under the Protection of God and the Laws; and that the Man, who on any pretence took away the Life of a Child, was guilty of Murder both in Law and Conſcience. That, as to what had been fooliſhly ſuggeſted about the Oaths, he could only ſay, that, if duly tender'd, he believed, they wou'd not be found to refuſe them. And as to their not being Chriſtians, the Crime in taking away their Lives might be doubled on that Account; as they were not only robb'd of Life in this World, but, according to the Doctrine of many Chriſtians, are prevented from attaining that eternal Felicity, to which they wou'd otherways ſoon have been intitled.

Surprized and confounded at a Diſcourſe ſo ſtrangely deliver'd, the Aſſembly ſtood amazed, and began to look with Contempt on *Pocus* and themſelves; when Sir *Edward* ſtarting up, cry'd: *Poh! poh! what Suff is all this about Circulations and Felicities! I know of no Circulation but Bank Circulation, nor any Felicity but in Gold:* and don't believe they have any thing to do with either. A Speech ſo well adapted to the Genius of the Aſſembly ſoon brought them back to their former Sentiments; when the immortal *Harvey* ſpoke again, and ſaid: Ye are a Race of Men much degenerated from thoſe, whom I once knew here, whom I loved, and whom I honour'd. Ye have neither the Learning, nor the Virtues, conſiſtent with the Character which ye profeſs. Ye contemn Knowledge, and ye are deſpiſed by the Princes and the wiſe Men of the Land. Ye ſhall become Slaves to Apothecaries, they ſhall direct your doings, and ye ſhall be a Scoff at their Meetings. Ye ſhall be viſited with Shame and Confuſion, and this your Dwelling ſhall be divided among the *Scots*.

and deſtroy your Petitioners, contrary to the Peace and good Order of his Majeſty's Government. (B)

And we your Petitioners particularly charge, that, if we cannot leave our Dwellings, and make our Appearance, ſo ſoon, as is expected, either from the Unwieldyneſs of our Gates, or by means of any other Obſtacle requireing Time for its Removal, or if through Fear of the Cruelties commonly exerciſed by the ſaid *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates, your Petitioners are unwilling to leave their Habitations, the ſaid *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates, being preſent, charge your Petitioners with a Riot tending to the Murder of our Mothers; for which Crime we are forthwith drag'd out of our Habitations by Hooks, Pincers, and other bloody Inſtruments, whereby we are ſometimes moſt miſerably torn and bruiſed, and at other times our Heads are ſo ſqueezed, that we are ever after ſubject to Fits, and Convulſions, unleſs (as by God's Goodneſs it often happens) we die under the Operation. And in caſe of any the leaſt Reſiſtance, whether on our part, or from the Nature, and Situation, of

(B) Of all the Practitioners, who exerciſe the different Branches of Phyſick, the Men-midwives alone (as ſuch) give no Teſt of their Learning, Dexterity, or Integrity; and yet theſe Men are permitted on their ſingle Opinions avowedly and profeſſedly to kill our Children, and to treat our Wives in ſuch manner, as frequently ends in their Deſtruction, and to have ſuch Intercourſe with our Women, as eaſily ſhifts itſelf into Indecency, from Indecency into Obſcenity, and from Oſcenity into Debauchery.

of our Habitations, we are ſentenced to Death as guilty of Rebellion, and in conſequence of ſuch Sentence we are ſometimes beheaded, and at other times our Brains are torn out by Inſtruments wickedly contrived for that Purpoſe. Or if your Petitioners happen to put an Arm out of Doors, whether in our own Defence, or to feel our way, the ſaid *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates, immediately cut off ſuch Arm as high, as they can reach; by which means your Petitioners bleed to Death in great Miſery and Torture.

And we your Petitioners likewiſe charge, that, if when drag'd out of our Habitations we are either already dead, and cannot, or ſo weak and terrified, that we dare not, cry for Mercy, we are then by the Directions of the ſaid *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates, ſhook and whip'd; contrary to that Humanity, which is due to the Diſtreſs'd, or that Decency, which is due to the Deceaſed.

And your Petitioners farther charge, that ſuch is the Ignorance and Infatuation of many Mothers, that they not only permit the ſaid *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates, to exerciſe their Cruelties as aforeſaid on your Petitioners, but are perſwaded likewiſe, that ſuch their Cruelties towards us are the only means, by which they our ſaid Mothers can be protected and preſerved from our wicked and horrid Purpoſes; ſo that the more Cruelties we ſuffer, the more our Mothers think themſelves

themſelves obliged for their Preſervation; and the more laviſhly they reward, and glorify our Executioners.

And whereas the ſaid *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates, being really ignorant and unſkill'd in the little Matters, they profeſs, often miſtake in their wicked Deſigns againſt us, and bruiſe, tear, and wound our Mothers in ſuch terrible manner, that they die of the Wounds and Bruiſes ſo received, your Petitioners charge, that ſuch Bruiſes and Wounds are always wickedly, and unjuſtly, ſaid to be made by your Petitioners; who, under the heavy Accuſation of haveing kill'd our Mothers, die unpity'd and unavenged. Whereas we your Petitioners deny, that we ever had any Intention to deſtroy, or that of our own Motion ever do injure our ſaid Mothers: but on the contrary we do aver, that ſuch Bruiſes, Wounds, and Injuries, are wholly owing to the Ignorance, Impatience, and ſavage Diſpoſition, of the ſaid *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates. And we your Petitioners are ready to prove ſuch our Averment, as well by compareing the Bills of Mortality in former Times, wherein good Women only attended our Affairs, with thoſe of later Years, in which theſe wicked Men have exerciſed their Barbarities; as by the Printed Accounts of the *Hoſpital* for Lying-in Women in *Brownlow-Street*: By which Accounts it is admitted, that one in Fifteen of all the Children there born, are drag'd dead into the World; and

and it is reſerved a Secret, how many more of the Fifteen die ſoon after of the Wounds and Bruiſes there received, as alſo how many of the Mothers remain alive, after paſſing through ſuch Experiments, as are there try'd on miſerable Mortals.

And your Petitioners farther charge, that the ſaid *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates, the better to warrant their wicked Doings, frequently aſſert, that your Petitioners were dead, before they came; and in order to ſupport this their Aſſertion, they (by the Advice of Dr. *Barebone* heretofore Tutor to the ſaid *Pocus*, and others) take an Opportunity to pinch our Navel-Strings; by which we are as expeditiouſly kill'd before Birth, as we could be by Drowning, or Suffocating, after it.

And we your Petitioners laſtly charge, that the Nurſes, who attend Labours, haveing generally no other View, but to make the moſt of their Calling; and finding that the ſaid *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates, takeing no Part of the Goſſips Gifts, the Midwife's Share is by that means divided between the Nurſes, think it their Intereſt as well to conceal the aforeſaid Cruelties practis'd upon us and our Mothers, as to endeavour by Lyes and falſe Repreſentations to terrify our Mothers from the Uſe of Midwives, and to advance the Credit and Reputation of the ſaid *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates. And with the ſame

View likewiſe they frequently entertain our Mothers with the moſt fooliſh Encomiums on the Comelineſs of Dr. *Barebone*'s Perſon, the polite and tender Behaviour of *Pocus*, or the delicate Wit and lively Imagination of *Maulus*, always concluding the Panegyrick with, *Oh the charming Man! it does one good to ſee him!* By which Behaviour of the Nurſes our Mothers are ſo influenced, and filled with ſuch high Ideas of the Abilities of theſe Men, that they believe all they ſay, and without Heſitation ſubmit themſelves and your Petitioners to be treated in ſuch manner, as the ſaid *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates, in their great Ignorance and Cruelty, ſhall think proper.

Now We your Petitioners humbly pray, That in virtue of an Act of the 14th of *Henry* the Eighth, impowering and directing you to ſuperviſe, examine, and correct Abuſes committed under the Name of Phyſick, and of the SOLEMN OATH you have ſeverally taken, to execute thoſe Powers, you will take the Premiſſes into Conſideration: That you will make full Inquiry into the Murders, and other Cruelties, charged to be committed by the ſaid *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates, on your Petitioners and our Mothers: That you will not, through the Influence of Publick, or Private, Factions, or the

the Intereſt of Perſonal Connexions, ſcreen Men, who wickedly build their Fortunes on the Ignorance and Fears of Women, to the Deſtruction of your Fellow Creatures: Who preſumptuouſly pretend to amend the Diſpoſitions of Providence: Who out-do the great Tempter of the firſt Woman; and, while they ſeduce our Mothers from their Obedience to God's Laws, carry his Vengance in their Hands, and add Tortures and Death to thoſe Sorrows, with which they were long ſince ſentenced to bring forth their Children.

And your Petitioners, if they may live to ſpeak, ſhall ever Pray.

FINIS.